The Chicago Tribune.

VOL. XXIII. CHICAGO, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1868. NUMBER 178

EUROPE.

The Eastern Question.

Speculations Concerning the Approaching Peace Conference.

The Conference to Assemble in Paris Early in January.

The Grecian Chambers Authorize the Raising of Troops and Money.

Turkish War Vessels Blockading Greek Ports.

The Eastern Troubles,
THE GREAT EUROPEAN AND THE PROPOSED CON-FERENCE.

LONDON, Dec. 26.

A dispatch from Vienna states it is certain that the Western Powers will agree with Austria respecting the conference. The Porte has extended the time for the departure of Greece from the Ionian dominions to five weeks.

FRESH DISTURBANCE IN EUROPE.

PARIS, Dec. 26.

The Patrie last evening had the following dispatch from Athens, dated December 25:—

The Commissioners of Action had addressed a petition to the Greek Government praying for the immediate convocation of the Chambers, which is closely followed by the movements of the Turkish fleet.

Russia has asked of Turkey and Greece a suspension of hostilities until the end of the month. The adhesion of Austria is regarded as certain, and Italy will do so as soon as possible. The appearance of the Turkish fleet before the Piræus and Count Rizzardi hopes the question will be laid to rest.

The Legal (Democratic) and last evening that France and England have little sympathy with the proposed conference.

THE CONFERENCE TO ASSEMBLE IN PARIS.

LONDON, Dec. 27.

It has been arranged that the conference of the Great Powers shall assemble in Paris early in January.

CHARGE OF ADMIRAL ARMAMENTS AT CONSTANTINOPLE AND ATHENS.

LONDON, Dec. 26.—Evening.

A despatch from Vienna states that the Austrian ambassadors at Constantinople and Athens are to be recalled, and the Russian filled by the same gentlemen, as a mark of confidence to both Turkey and Greece.

THE GRECIAN CHAMBERS AUTHORIZE THE RAISING OF MONEY AND MEN.

LONDON, Dec. 26.

A despatch from Athens, 25th, says that the Greek chambers have voted the money asked for by the government. The Chambers also authorized the government to call out a force of 30,000 men. The Greek fleet is ordered to the Archipelago. The Turkish fleet is also ordered to the Archipelago, and their war steamers are ordered to Candia.

THE GREEK

The Tribune.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1859

THE DAILY TRIBUNE is issued every morning (except Monday), and delivered to City subscribers and sent by mail.

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THE LAW OF LIBEL.

The publishers of newspapers in most of the States are subjected to an annoyance, harassment and expense for which there is no just reason, and which base legislation should have long since prohibited. The law of libel in the State is to be found in the common law of England as it existed at the time of the American Revolution, modified a little, perhaps, by a statute of limitations, and by the Constitution of the State. Occasionally the courts have yielded to the spirit of the age, and construed the freedom of the press more liberally. Under this law the publication of the ordinary news of the day, so far as it affects injuriously the character of an individual, is technically libellous, and the law presumes it to be malicious. It is quite enough for any newspaper to prove in vindication that the publication was duly decent, and was made without any proper precautions to prevent it; that it was made with no purpose, present or remote, of injuring any person; that primary intent to repersonate the same paper made public upon gossip and conjecture—the law insists that the publisher is still liable, and though but nominal damages can be obtained, he must pay the costs. The law of libel in the State is in many particulars exactly what it was in England when George the Third's wars on the throne. But the English law of libel has become since a topical rule compared with our own. In an action for libel in England a verdict upon a technicality that does not carry costs. If in the trial of a case the allegation of English malice be disproved, and nothing remains of the case but the fact that the plaintiff had been falsely and maliciously libelled, the English Court will offer a verdict of a farthing or penny, without costs, and refuse to permit any other. In this country there is no such discretion given to courts, and a jury obliged on technical grounds to find for the plaintiff, now time onsle parties to the transaction of exposing the defendant in the train of the case, and then to have him fined and discharged. This is an outrageous oppression. Why should a journalist convicted of a technical libel, punishable with one cent, change, be obliged to the payment of several thousand dollars of costs? In other States, and in England, the libel must be the jury must be for an amount indicating a malicious disposition in the plaintiff to coin. The effect of this rule has been to discomfiture the multitude of libel suits which, previous to that time, were to be found on the docket of the courts. Bringing suits for libel against newspapers was a cheap way of advertising many legal firms, because so long as there was a charge of libel there was to be a verdict including costs. Hundreds of lawyers gladly gave their services in such cases, deeming the notoriety and publicity of the suits ample compensation for their services. But the change in the law rendering it certain that such cases must follow the merits of the case, not as and to a great measure, to that abominable system of vexatious law-suits. In Illinois, however, the old rule remains, and in this there is not a newspaper which publishes a line day to day the ordinary news which may not have in its office covered all over with writs claiming damages for libel. Every suit can be brought with impunity by any abuser because the costs fall on the defendant, no matter how honestly and conscientiously he may have acted in the matter. Hence, while a newspaper is assailed by hungry jackalls in the legal profession, it is obliged in self-defence to settle back and pay for peace, by screwing up the character of the defendant. People who come into court presenting that their characters have been damaged to the amount of thousands of dollars, must not complain of a newspaper which they are persecuting if it turns round and proves they have little or no character to be damaged, and therefore they are entitled to no damages and must pay their costs except on appeal.

The Legislature of Illinois at its present session will have before them similar to that in Wisconsin, which makes the libel corrective, makes the criminals of the office and in the absence of the proof of actual malice damages are limited to the plaintiff's cost. In the case of such a law the policy of Illinois are in constant danger of harassment from vexatious suits, wanton or damage has been done to any person's reputation, the press of Illinois, and every good citizen in favor of the freedom from persecution, should go to the Legislature to petition them from the law. The barbarous and vindictive code of the 17th and 18th centuries should no longer be tolerated in Illinois.

THE LATE ENGLISH ELECTION.

It is amusing to an American to read in the English papers the minute accounts of the general Parliamentary election. The excitement is not one day only, as in this country, but extends over a period of three weeks. There are no polls opened in England in which a contest was made that did not occupy a day, and, strange to say, the voting and counting were as much a feature in the agricultural districts as in the cities.

In England they have much to learn in all the business of conducting an election. The privilege of voting was heretofore confined to a few persons that, except in very large districts, the polling in each district has been a mere place, and in this way the hardest proprietors of the small tenements of boroughs have been able to secure their votes, and therefore it not directly elected, they have been a potent for their losses and for their losses of living, have always been compelled to vote in the province of their landlords. The intimidation of the tenantry has added to the abhorrence of the country. English Parliamentary corruption was carried to an extraordinary extent, and in those districts where the two candidates were wholesale merchants. The cry of bribery made a great example to return the successful candidate. They gave money lavishly, not only to buy votes, but to engage workmen to go to the polls and vote in such a manner as to occupy the time of the voters to the utmost possible extent. Every candidate who can do a work keeps his own drinkers, and many of them were hired to refrain from the candidacy because of the value of their custom. That is not to be wondered at by the ordinary reader, when it is not a newspaper which publishes a line day to day the ordinary news which may not have in its office covered all over with writs claiming damages for libel. Every suit can be brought with impunity by any abuser because the costs fall on the defendant, no matter how honestly and conscientiously he may have acted in the matter. Hence, while a newspaper is assailed by hungry jackalls in the legal profession, it is obliged in self-defence to settle back and pay for peace, by screwing up the character of the defendant. People who come into court presenting that their characters have been damaged to the amount of thousands of dollars, must not complain of a newspaper which they are persecuting if it turns round and proves they have little or no character to be damaged, and therefore they are entitled to no damages and must pay their costs except on appeal.

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A SAD EVENT.

Death, under Painful Circumstances, of Mrs. Augustus N. Dickens.

An Overdose of Morphine the Cause of Her Demise.

A Day of Gladness, Turned to One of Sorrow and Tears.

The Circumstances.

Mrs. Dickens, widow of the late Augustus N. Dickens, and sister-in-law to Charles Dickens, the well-known novelist, was found dead in her bed on Thursday [illegible] at her residence, No. 262 North Clark street, in this city. She and her children were waiting to a party, given on Christmas Eve, by Mrs. Lawrence, opposite to her house, and who lives on the West Side. Mrs. Dickens had not got dressed, but went for refreshment, and the following note, explaining her absence:

DEAR EMMA: I have a terrible pain yesterday, somewhere around the top of my person and in consequence could not get dressed in the morning. The effect has been to prevent your invitation [illegible] and to [illegible] from coming to your house. I am [illegible] the cause of, if [illegible] after your [illegible] of being all right in the morning as we are anticipating a merry little dinner by [illegible]

"BERTHA."

The children passed gaily from the house, never thinking they would never again see her alive. They went to the party with light hearts, and enjoyed themselves to the top of their bent. When the fun and frolic had ended, it was found one was for them to go home, as Mrs. Lawrence kept them over the next morning. She then purged them on the cars, and they reached home in safety. Their mother was not up, as they knew had, but no answer was returned; all was still and silent as the grave. Everything appeared undisturbed, and the door, they went in was as Mrs. Dickens had left it. Nothing was touched and all that lady whom so recently was the life and soul of the party, was no more. Servants [illegible] but two, for one she is Mrs. Burnett's cook, and the other a girl of all work. The latter had been living without effect, Mr. Burnett called for the house by himself, without any one knowing his intent. Mrs. Burnett and [illegible] to Mrs. Dickens' room, where she found her lying on the bed, [illegible] on the counterpane, and [illegible] on the floor. Her face was composed, and as if [illegible] that she was in the city of rest. Her left hand was [illegible] and her body quite warm and soft, [illegible] was apparently as natural as in life. An [illegible] was sent for, and he pronounced [illegible] and that death must have occurred [illegible] hours before.

Beside the side of the bed were found two bottles, one of them nearly full of morphine and the other about one-half. An examination of the contents of the bottle [illegible] a cork and [illegible] the bottle. The cork [illegible] was found on the floor, and [illegible] to partake of Christmas cheer. [illegible] had left a number of [illegible] and [illegible] to be taken, but [illegible] the dose [illegible] was nearly [illegible] of the contents of the bottle [illegible] the [illegible] of which was supposed to be [illegible] a dose [illegible] for the two bottles found by the [illegible] of which was supposed to be [illegible] the same Mrs. Burnett purchased, was nearly full, showing that the dose [illegible] was small. It would seem that she took the medicine in the morning, and [illegible] the effects [illegible] she commenced retiring, in the [illegible] room adjoining that occupied by her husband. Her father was in the [illegible] room, and [illegible] her children, [illegible] and [illegible].

The [illegible] passed [illegible] Mrs. Burnett [illegible] Mrs. Dickens [illegible] the [illegible] ready for [illegible] the [illegible] Mrs. Burnett [illegible] Mrs. Dickens